

Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Request for Grant Proposals:

FY 2014 Youth Ambassadors Program

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: ECA-ECAPEC-14-043

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.415

Application Deadline: Friday, April 18, 2014

Executive Summary: The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division, of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces an open competition for the FY 2014 Youth Ambassadors Program with South America, Central America, the Caribbean, Canada, and Haiti. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals to recruit and select youth and adult participants, to provide the participants with three-week exchanges focused on civic education, community service, and youth leadership development, and to support follow-on projects in their home communities. Exchange delegations will travel to the United States from Canada, Haiti, ten South American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela), eight Central American countries (Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama), and six countries in the Caribbean (the Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago); U.S. exchange delegations will travel to select countries. It is the Bureau's intent to award multiple cooperative agreements (one base year plus two

option years) for an estimated total amount of \$8,475,000. Please see section II.) Award Information, below for additional details.

I. Funding Opportunity Description:

Authority:

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is “to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world.” The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

Overview:

The Youth Ambassadors Program provides participants with a comprehensive survey of civic education, community service, and youth leadership development, building their knowledge and skill levels in these areas and supporting them as they become active and responsible members of their communities. The program includes a three-week exchange for high school youth (ages 15-18) and adult educators focused on these themes and on

subthemes such as social inclusion, entrepreneurship (including social entrepreneurship), innovation, and environmental protection. Participants engage in a variety of activities such as workshops on leadership and service, community site visits related to the program themes and subthemes, interactive training, presentations, visits to high schools, local cultural activities, homestays, civic education programming in Washington, D.C., or the capital city of the partner country, and other activities designed to achieve the program's stated goals. Multiple opportunities for participants to interact meaningfully with their host country peers will be included. Follow-on activities with the participants are an integral part of the program, as the students apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired by planning service projects in their home communities.

The FY 2014 Youth Ambassadors Program will focus on the following countries:

Argentina, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela, and the United States. Pending the availability of funds, it is anticipated that foreign participants will travel from all of these countries to the United States, and that American participants will travel to select countries (see below).

The program goals are to:

- 1) Promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other citizens in the Western Hemisphere;

- 2) Prepare youth leaders to become responsible citizens and contributing members of their communities;
- 3) Influence the attitudes of the leaders of a new generation; and
- 4) Foster relationships among youth from different ethnic, racial, religious, and national groups and create hemispheric networks of youth leaders, both within the participating countries and internationally.

The program objectives are for participants to:

- 1) Demonstrate a better understanding of the elements of a participatory democracy in action;
- 2) Demonstrate critical thinking and leadership skills; and
- 3) Demonstrate skill at developing project ideas and planning a course of action to bring the projects to fruition.

The primary program themes are:

- 1) Civic Education (Citizen Participation, Grassroots Democracy and Rule of Law);
- 2) Community Service; and
- 3) Youth Leadership Development

For each project, applicant organizations must focus on these primary themes.

Subthemes, such as social inclusion, entrepreneurship (including social entrepreneurship), innovation, and environmental protection will serve to illustrate the more abstract concepts of the primary themes. For example, the subtheme of

environmental protection can be used to examine how a group of individuals demonstrate leadership and service by initiating a recycling campaign in their community. The subtheme should be integrated into most aspects of the program, including workshops, presentations and community service.

Using these goals, objectives, and themes, applicant organizations should identify their own specific and measurable outputs and outcomes based on the project specifications provided in this solicitation.

Project Options:

Total funding for the base year of the project is approximately \$2,825,000. ECA anticipates awarding multiple cooperative agreements for the management of the Youth Ambassadors Program with South America, Central America, the Caribbean, Haiti and Canada that together will cover all 26 countries. ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal project configurations, budgets, and participant numbers in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. In addition, ECA reserves the right to adjust the participating countries should conditions change in the partner country or if other countries are identified as Department priorities.

Organizations may apply for one or more of the options outlined below, but they must submit only one proposal under this competition. Multiple submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will not be considered further in the review process. ECA strongly urges organizations to focus their applications on countries where they have the

strongest organizational capacity. This capacity must be thoroughly described in the proposal. Please note the total approximate funding for each option.

If an applicant includes three or more countries in its proposal, with the exception of the Caribbean (Option 7), the applicant must supply a one to two page narrative on each country included in the exchange in the appendix, outlining specific in-country capacity and activities in detail. ECA encourages applicants to be creative and flexible in making arrangements that will help meet our program goals.

Please note that all seven options described below involve foreign participant travel to the United States. Only Options 1, 2, and 6 will support U.S. participant travel to select countries.

Although ECA encourages award recipients to send delegations that include participants from multiple countries in three of the options (Option 1: South America; Option 6: Central America; and Option 7: the Caribbean), not all delegations must travel to the United States at the same time. It is suitable to break them down into smaller single country or sub-regional groups. Applicants who plan to send a large delegation representing multiple countries to the United States at one time must propose a plan to break them into smaller cohorts for most of the exchange activities. This will ensure that all participants actively take part in the exchange and that program staff can adequately monitor the safety and well-being of the participants. Applicants are encouraged to hold the welcome and closing orientations with the entire delegation.

U.S. applicants are required to have in-country partner organizations for all options listed below except for Brazil (Option 2) and the Caribbean (Option 7). In those two options, the U.S. embassies will be responsible for participant recruitment. All of the exchanges will take place at various points throughout 2015, as feasible, and all exchanges will be programmed in English unless otherwise noted.

Option 1: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela (approximately \$1,250,000 total, with one to five awards)

Projects for participants from eight South American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela) to travel to the United States and for U.S. participants to travel to select countries.

Approximately 10-15 participants from each South American country listed above will travel to the United States; 10-15 U.S. participants will travel to one or more select countries within this group: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay.

Applicants must include at least two South American countries, and may include up to all eight countries, in their proposals.

Applicants may choose to include at least one reciprocal exchange for U.S. participants if the proposal includes one of the seven eligible countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile,

Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay). Applicants should only propose sending U.S. participants to countries where they can provide the most comprehensive programming for them.

Option 2: Brazil (approximately \$250,000)

A reciprocal project for participants from Brazil and the United States.

Approximately 37 Brazilians (35 youth and 2 adults) will travel to the United States, and 10-15 U.S. participants will travel to Brazil. The U.S. Embassy in Brasilia will serve as the in-country partner and the programming will be done in English. The Embassy will manage Brazilian participant recruitment and selection, cover Brazilian participants' in-country expenses, arrange and purchase their international travel, oversee their follow-on activities, and administer the Brazil-based exchange activities for the U.S. participants.

The award recipient will be responsible for organizing and funding the U.S.-based exchange activities for the Brazilian participants. The award recipient will also be responsible for U.S. participant recruitment and selection, covering U.S. participants' pre-departure expenses, including international travel, paying for all program expenses in Brazil for U.S. participants, and managing U.S. participants' follow-on activities. The exchange to the United States will take place in January 2015, and the exchange to Brazil will take place in summer 2015.

Option 3: Ecuador (approximately \$135,000)

A project conducted in Spanish for Ecuadorian citizens. Approximately 10-15 participants will travel to the United States in September 2015. Efforts to include marginalized populations should be proposed. Participants will not need English skills to participate and applicants should propose programming in the Spanish language and provide for interpretation.

Option 4: Canada (approximately \$130,000)

A project conducted in English for Canadian citizens with a subtheme of social inclusion. Approximately 10-15 participants will travel to the United States. Recruitment must focus on new Canadians (first generation Canadians and Canadians born outside Canada), and members of the First Nations, and efforts to include marginalized populations should be proposed.

Option 5: Haiti (approximately \$135,000)

A project conducted in French for Haitian citizens. Approximately 10-15 participants from Haiti will travel to the United States. Participants will not need English skills to participate and applicants should propose programming in the French language and provide for interpretation.

Option 6: Central America and the Dominican Republic (approximately \$750,000)

Two projects from seven Central American countries and the Dominican Republic to travel to the United States and for U.S. participants to travel to select countries.

Approximately 10-15 participants from each country (Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican

Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama) will travel to the United States. One project will be for participants from Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Panama and will be conducted in Spanish, and one project will be for participants from Belize, El Salvador, and Honduras and will be conducted in English.

Applicants may choose to include at least one reciprocal exchange for U.S. participants to travel to at least two of the eligible countries (Belize, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Nicaragua). Applicants should only propose sending U.S. participants to countries where they can provide the most comprehensive programming for them. American participants in the Spanish language exchange project should have intermediate conversational Spanish skills.

Option 7: Caribbean (approximately \$175,000)

A project conducted in English for approximately 30-40 participants from the Caribbean (the Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago and other smaller Caribbean countries served by Embassy Bridgetown that are listed below).

For this project, the U.S. Embassies in the participating countries will serve as the in-country partners and recruit and select the participants. Proposals should note the applicant's willingness to work with the Program Office and participating U.S. Embassies to finalize proposed country groupings and dates for the exchanges once an award is made.

Please note that Embassy Bridgetown (Barbados) serves several eastern Caribbean countries and the participants Embassy Bridgetown selects may come from any of the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and/or St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Participants:

Both the American and international youth and adult participants must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- 1) Be citizens of the country from which they are applying (dual U.S. citizens are not eligible);
- 2) Be selected through a merit-based competition;
- 3) Represent the diversity of their home country; and
- 4) Demonstrate an interest in the partner country and the project themes.

Criteria for selection of the participants will include leadership skills, an interest in service to the community, strong academic and social skills, openness and flexibility. To reach beyond the elite, participants should be recruited from underserved or disadvantaged populations of youth in these countries, including public high schools. Geographic, socio-economic, and ethnic diversity is important, including outreach to indigenous and Afro-descendant populations. It is desirable that a few participants live in the same community to facilitate future collaboration upon their return to their home country.

The youth participants must be high school students aged 15 to 18 years old at the start of the exchange, with at least one semester of high school remaining. The adult participants may be teachers, trainers, school administrators, and/or community leaders who work with youth. They will have the role of chaperone, exchange participant, and post-exchange mentor. The ratio of youth to adults should be approximately 10:1, depending on the size of the exchange delegation. Preference should be given to individuals who have not previously traveled to the partner country, especially on a U.S. government-sponsored program.

For the Canada, Central American, South American and Caribbean projects that will be conducted in English, the participants must have sufficient English language proficiency to participate fully in interactions with their host families and their peers and in all educational activities. The Central America project conducted in Spanish and the Haiti project in French do not require English-speaking participants. For the U.S.-based activities that will be conducted in Spanish or French, the award recipient must provide interpretation and must place participants who speak no English with host families where at least one member speaks Spanish or French. Spanish language ability is required for the American participants traveling to the Spanish-language project countries and is strongly recommended for the Americans traveling to the English-language project countries that speak Spanish: Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. Portuguese is not required for the U.S. participants traveling to Brazil.

Organizational Capacity:

Applicant organizations must demonstrate their capacity for conducting international youth exchanges, focusing on three areas of competency: (1) provision of projects that address the goals, objectives, and themes outlined in this document; (2) age-appropriate programming for youth; and (3) previous experience working on programs in the region. Organizations must demonstrate their capacity to manage a complex, multi-phase program with several separate exchange projects.

In addition to their U.S. presence, applicants must have the organizational capacity in the relevant countries through their own offices or through a partner organization or institution to recruit and select participants for the project, to provide follow-on activities, and to organize a content-rich program for the U.S. participants, if specified. The importance of a viable, experienced in-country partner cannot be over-emphasized and details of this capacity should be included in the addendum. Applicants should consult with their partners and involve them in the proposal preparation. Before submitting a proposal, applicants may consult with Public Affairs Sections in U.S. Embassies concerning the selection and reliability of in-country partner organizations. Please e-mail ECA Program Officer Melissa Cotton (CottonME@state.gov) for Embassy contact information.

U.S. Embassy Involvement:

It is important that the proposal narrative clearly state the applicant's commitment to consult closely with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in the host country to

develop plans for project implementation, including recruitment, selection and orientation of participants, publicity events, and follow-on activities, once a cooperative agreement is awarded. In countries where there is a reciprocal component involving U.S. citizen minors, the U.S. Embassy will provide oversight and monitoring; concur on housing arrangements, including host family locations (regions, neighborhoods); represent the U.S. Government while the exchange activities are taking place in the host country; and assist program staff and participants in the event of an emergency. At the same time, the cooperative agreement requires that the administering organization must be able to manage the program in the host country in its entirety, with little reliance on embassy staff for support. For the Brazil project (Option 2) and the Caribbean (Option 7), the U.S. Embassies will serve as the in-country partners.

Guidelines:

It is anticipated that the cooperative agreement will begin on or about August 1, 2014. The base year award period will span 12 to 18 months, and will cover all aspects of the programming in South America, Central America, the Caribbean, Haiti, Canada and the United States – participant recruitment, selection, and orientation, three weeks of exchange activities, and support of follow-on activities. Planning and preparation will start in 2014, and the exchanges will take place at various points throughout 2015. Applicants should propose the period of the exchange(s) in their proposals, but the exact timing of the project may be altered through the mutual agreement of the Department of State and the recipient.

The award recipient's responsibilities include:

Recruitment and Selection: Manage the recruitment and merit-based selection of youth and adult participants in cooperation with the Public Affairs Sections of the U.S.

Embassies in the participating countries. [Please note exceptions: In Brazil and the Caribbean, the U.S. Embassies will manage the recruitment and selection of foreign participants.] Collaboration with Binational Centers (BNCs) is suggested, if possible.

Once a cooperative agreement is awarded, the recipient must consult with the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy to review a participant recruitment and selection plan and to determine the degree of Embassy involvement in the process. Organizers must strive for regional, socio-economic, and ethnic/racial diversity, as well as gender balance.

For reciprocal projects sending U.S. participants to Central and South America, the recipients must manage the recruitment and open, merit-based selection of U.S.

participants. Award recipients are encouraged to publically advertise the call for applications and recruit diverse participants from the United States for programs in Central and South America. The Department of State and/or its overseas representatives will have final approval of all selected delegations.

Orientations: Provide orientations for exchange participants and for those participating from the host communities, including host families.

Logistics: Manage all logistical arrangements, including passport and visa applications, international and domestic travel, ground transportation, accommodations, interpretation, group meals, and disbursement of stipends.

Exchange Activities: Design and plan three weeks of exchange activities that provide a creative and substantive program that develops both the youth and the adult participants' knowledge and skill base in civic education, community service, and youth leadership development. The activities will showcase diversity, which should be defined broadly to include geographic, urban/rural, ethnic, racial, socio-economic, sexual orientation, political, and religious diversity. The exchange will take place in the capital city (Washington, D.C. or that of the host country) and in one or two other communities. The exchanges will focus primarily on interactive activities, practical experiences, and other hands-on opportunities that provide a substantive project on the specified program themes. Some activities should be school and/or community-based, and the projects will involve as much sustained interaction with peers of the host country as possible (for both the youth and adult participants). Cultural, social, and recreational activities will balance the schedule.

Accommodations: Arrange home stays for the participants in the United States with properly screened and briefed American families for the majority of the exchange period. Criminal background checks must be conducted for members of host families (and others living in the home) who are 18 years or older. In the partner countries, home stays are strongly desired whenever feasible in properly screened and briefed South American and

Central American families. Please see the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) for details on the host family screening requirements.

Monitoring: Develop and implement a plan to monitor the participants' safety and well-being while on the exchange and to create opportunities for participants to share potential issues and resolve them promptly. The award recipient must provide proper staff supervision and facilitation to ensure that the teenagers have safe and pedagogically rich programs. Staff, along with the adult participants, will assist the youth with cultural adjustments, provide societal context to enhance learning, and counsel students as needed. For the safety and security of both foreign and American participants, applicants must comply with the monitoring and supervision requirements, as well as the host family screening requirements, outlined in the POGI.

Follow-on Activities and In-Country Programming: Plan and implement activities in the participants' home countries by facilitating continued engagement among the participants, advising and supporting them in the implementation of community service projects, and offering opportunities to reinforce the ideas, values and skills imparted during the exchange as Department of State alumni. Exchange participants should return home from the exchange prepared to conduct projects that serve a need in their schools or communities. To amplify program impact, proposals should present creative and effective ways to address the project themes, for both program participants and their peers. Follow-on activities could include a plan for staff to travel to the partner countries

to supplement the in-country partners' work in conducting additional training and facilitating the development and delivery of the participants' follow-on projects.

Evaluation: Design and implement an evaluation plan that assesses the short- and medium-term project impact on the participants and on host and home communities.

Please note:

In a cooperative agreement, the Department is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine grant monitoring. The Department's activities and responsibilities for the Youth Ambassadors Program are as follows:

- 1) Provide advice and assistance in the execution of all program components;
- 2) Facilitate interaction within the Department of State, to include ECA, the regional bureaus, and overseas posts;
- 3) Arrange meetings with Department of State officials in Washington, D.C. and the partner countries;
- 4) Approve the final candidate selection and alternates;
- 5) Issue DS-2019 forms required for the J-1 visas for the foreign participants. All foreign participants will travel on a U.S. Government designation for the J Exchange Visitor Program;
- 6) Approve applications, publicity materials, and final calendar of exchange activities;

- 7) Approve housing arrangements, including the host families' location (in South America and Central America only);
- 8) Monitor and evaluate the program, through regular communication with the award recipient and possibly one or more site visits;
- 9) Host a one-day meeting for award recipients in Washington, D.C., in Fall 2014;
- 10) The U.S. Embassy will serve as the in-country partner organization in Brazil and in the Caribbean only; and
- 11) Perform an annual performance evaluation/review. Satisfactory performance and the availability of funds is a condition of continued administration of the program and execution of all option years.

Proposal narratives should include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional option years, pending successful performance and availability of funds. The narrative should focus on details specific to the implementation of the base year program, with the understanding that the program design, duration and participant numbers would be similar when/if the subsequent two option years are exercised.

Additional Information:

Award recipients will retain the name "Youth Ambassadors Program" to identify their project. All materials, publicity, and correspondence related to the program will acknowledge this as a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the

U.S. Department of State. ECA will retain copyright use of and be allowed to distribute materials related to this program as it sees fit.

The organization must inform the ECA Program Officer of its progress at each stage of the project's implementation in a timely fashion, and it must obtain approval of any significant program changes before their implementation.

Proposals must demonstrate how the applicant will meet the stated objectives. The proposal narrative should provide detailed information on the major project activities, and applicants should explain and justify their programmatic choices. Projects must comply with J-1 visa regulations for the International Visitor and Government Visitor category. Please be sure to refer to the complete Solicitation Package – this RFGP, the POGI, and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) – for further information.

II. Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreements. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under number I above.

Fiscal Year Funds: \$2,825,000, FY 2014 – base year; \$2,825,000, FY 2015 – option year-one; \$2,825,000, FY 2016 – option year-two, pending successful performance and availability of funds.

Approximate Total Funding: \$8,475,000. This figure represents base year plus two option years, pending successful performance and availability of funds.

Approximate Number of Awards: four to seven

Approximate Average Award: \$500,000 – FY 2014 base year

Anticipated Award Date: August 1, 2014

Anticipated Project Completion Date: December 31, 2017. This date reflects the anticipated duration of the award – one base year plus two option years.

Additional Information: A Cooperative Agreement(s) will be awarded for a period of 12-18 months (base year) with options for two additional 12 month periods (option years one and two). ECA will notify the recipient of our intention to exercise or not to exercise an option year at least 90 days in advance of expiration of the current year after an internal evaluation of the recipient's performance. The decision to exercise option years will depend both on the satisfactory performance of the recipient and the availability of funds.

III. Eligibility Information:

III.1. Eligible applicants: Applications may be submitted by public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved

agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, (Revised), Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

III.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:

- a.) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making multiple awards for the Project Options detailed above, most of which will exceed \$130,000, to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges are eligible to apply for Option 4: Canada only. The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.
- b) Proposed sub-award recipients are also limited to grant funding of \$130,000 or less if they do not have four years of experience in conducting international exchanges.
- c) Organizations may submit only one proposal (total) under this competition. If multiple proposals are received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will be given no further consideration in the review process.

Please note: Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

IV. Application and Submission Information:

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

IV.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package:

Please contact ECA-PE/C/PY/T, SA-5, 3rd floor, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, 202-632-6325, fax: 202-632-9355 CottonME@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify Melissa Cotton and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement on all other inquiries and correspondence.

IV.2. To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet:

The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at <http://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding> or from the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Please read all information before downloading.

IV.3. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under IV.3f. “Application Deadline and Methods of Submission” section below.

IV.3a. You are required to have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a DUNS number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a DUNS number, access <http://www.dunandbradstreet.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your DUNS number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package.

IV.3b. All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative and budget.

Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

IV.3c. All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the System for Award Management (SAM) database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in www.SAM.gov until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. Failure to register in SAM will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- 1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.

- 2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

IV.3d. All ECA awards recipient organizations must be registered with GrantSolutions by accessing www.GrantSolutions.gov. To register as a first time user of GrantSolutions, please scroll to the bottom of the home page and click “Getting Started-Request a User Account” at <http://home.grantsolutions.gov/home/home/customer-support/getting->

started/. Organizations that have previously used GrantSolutions do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact GrantSolutions.gov Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Grantee Organizations is available from 8 AM – 6 PM EST, Monday – Friday and can be reached at help@grantsolutions.gov or 1-866-577-0771.

Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

IV.3d.1. Adherence To All Regulations Governing The J Visa

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is the official program sponsor of the exchange program covered by this RFGP, and an employee of the Bureau will be the "Responsible Officer" for the program under the terms of 22 CFR 62, which covers the administration of the Exchange Visitor Program (J visa program). Under the terms of 22 CFR 62, organizations receiving awards (either a grant or cooperative agreement) under this RFGP will be third parties "cooperating with or assisting the sponsor in the conduct of the sponsor's program." The actions of recipient organizations shall be "imputed to the sponsor in evaluating the sponsor's compliance with" 22 CFR 62. Therefore, the Bureau expects that any organization receiving an award under this competition will render all assistance necessary to enable the Bureau to fully comply with 22 CFR 62 et seq.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by recipient organizations and program participants to all regulations governing the J visa program status. Therefore, proposals should explicitly state in writing that the applicant is prepared to assist the Bureau in meeting all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62. If your organization has experience as a designated Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor, the applicant should discuss their record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et. seq., including the oversight of their Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://j1visa.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division

U.S. Department of State

SA-44, Suite 668

301 4th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20547

IV.3d.2. Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social and cultural life in the United States and abroad. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support of Diversity' section of this document as well as the DIVERSITY, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have

inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

IV.3d.3. Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this RFGP.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the RFGP (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

Please note: Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it: 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

IV.3d.4. Virtual Exchange Component: ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration and widen participation in the overall project to a broader audience. ECA strongly encourages

organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s), defined as technology-enabled, sustainable, people-to-people, cross-cultural exchanges, is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms, including our International Exchange Alumni space. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project by project basis.

IV.3e. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

IV.3e.1. Applicants must submit SF-424A – “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

For competitions that will be renewed through the option year, applicants must submit:

- the SF-424A which must include the budget request amount for the base-year of the program;

- a detailed proposal narrative and budget for the base year of funding (Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instruction Document (PSI) for general budget guidance.). The narrative should also include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional option years, pending successful program performance and availability of funds; and
- an abbreviated/estimated summary budget presenting the total projected administrative and program costs for the anticipated total duration of programming (base year, plus two option years).

To exercise the option year mechanism the recipient will be required to submit:

1. timely quarterly performance and financial reports;
2. a request in writing to ECA at least 90 days in advance of the expiration of the current program year;
3. a summary budget that projects program expenses through the end of the current year;
4. a detailed budget outlining both administrative and program expenses for the requested option year; and
5. a brief narrative to support the continuation of the award.

The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will:

- 1.) closely monitor the recipient's performance through site visits, desk audits, mandatory quarterly performance and financial reports, consultations, and other forms of

communication and dialogue before exercising additional option years. (Additional details regarding monitoring and oversight of the program by ECA representatives will be provided at the time the base-year award is made.)

2.) review and evaluate all mandatory quarterly program and financial reports;

- All program and financial reporting requirements must be current and up-to-date before the Bureau will exercise additional option years.
- Any/all concerns, issues, or modifications requested by the Grants Officer or Program Officer to the original program design or method of implementation must be responded to in writing.
- The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will review and advise of ECA's approval or disapproval of the response before issuing subsequent option years.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

IV.3f. Application Deadline and Method of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: Friday, April 18, 2014

Method of Submission:

Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov

(<http://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Find" portion of the system.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov

Please follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted>).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this RFGP to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov.

Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located

under the "For Applicants" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system.

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays

Email: support@grants.gov

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website, for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the

application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

IV.3g. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

V. Application Review Information

V.1. REVIEW PROCESS

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional bureaus, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of

State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. Quality of the program idea: Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. The proposal should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. The proposed program should be creative, age-appropriate, respond to the design outlined in the solicitation, and demonstrate originality. It should be clearly and accurately written, substantive, and with sufficient detail. Proposals should also include a plan to support participants' community activities upon their return home.

2. Program planning: A detailed agenda and work plan should clearly demonstrate how project objectives would be achieved. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above. The substance of workshops, seminars, presentations, school-based activities, site visits, and follow on project planning should be described in detail.

3. Support of Diversity: The proposal should demonstrate the recipient's commitment to promoting the awareness and understanding of diversity in participant recruitment and selection and in program content. Applicants should demonstrate readiness to accommodate participants with physical disabilities.

4. Institutional Capacity and Track Record: Proposed personnel and institutional resources in both the United States and in the partner countries should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program goals. The proposal should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

5. Program Evaluation: The proposal should include a plan to evaluate the program's success in meeting its goals, both as the activities unfold and after they have been completed. The proposal should include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique, plus a description of a methodology to link outcomes to original project objectives. The award recipient will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each project component is concluded.

6. Cost-effectiveness and Cost Sharing: The applicant should demonstrate efficient use of Bureau funds. The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items

should be necessary and appropriate. The proposal should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions, which demonstrates institutional and community commitment.

VI. Award Administration Information

VI.1a. Award Notices:

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and mailed to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations."

Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, “Cost Principles for Educational Institutions.”

OMB Circular A-87, “Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Governments”.

OMB Circular No. A-110 (Revised), Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations.

OMB Circular No. A-102, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Aid to State and Local Governments.

OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Government, and Non-profit Organizations

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants>.

<http://fa.statebuy.state.gov>

VI.3. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

- 1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer.) The first page of the Performance Progress Report form (SF-PPR) must be submitted with all programmatic reports and can be found here:

http://aopefa.a.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68. The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Grant Note* under the corresponding record for this Agreement in GrantSolutions.gov. For assistance, please contact the GrantSolutions Help Desk at 1 (866) 577-0771 (toll free for U.S. callers) or by email at help@grantsolutions.gov. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at:

<http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.
- 2.) A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all program performance reports.
- 3.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 4.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-

mailed to: FFATAECA@state.gov. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

- 5.) Because this competition allows for the exercise of Option Years, applicants must be placed on a mandatory quarterly program and financial reporting cycle. The due dates for these reports will be included in the final assistance award document. The program and financial reports must demonstrate substantial progress by addressing progress towards the original approved goals and objectives, relative activities and events, and supporting fiscal data. The reports will be reviewed by both the assigned Grant Officer and Program Officer.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to IV. Application and Submission Instructions (IV.3.d.3) above for Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Melissa Cotton, U.S. Department of State, Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY/T, SA-5, 3rd Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, by telephone 202-632-6325, fax 202-632-9355, or e-mail CottonME@state.gov.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP should reference the title and funding opportunity number listed at the top of this solicitation.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

VIII. Other Information:**Notice:**

The terms and conditions published in this RFGP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFGP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section VI.3 above.

Evan Ryan

February, 24, 2014

Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs

U.S. Department of State